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AUTHOR High, Reginald M.; Achilles, C. M.
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ABSTRACT

To discover if there were differences in the influence-gaining behaviors of principals in schools of varying levels of instructional effectiveness, 9 of 19 urban schools involved in a school improvement project were selected for study. All the schools met the following criteria: involvement in the project for at least 1 year, employment of the same principal for a minimum of 3 years, and student population composed of at least 95 percent minorities. Based on student test scores, two elementary and one middle school were designated as "high-achieving schools" and four elementary and two middle schools were designated as "other schools." Data for the study were obtained from questionnaire responses by teachers and principals on their perceptions of the principals' behaviors categorized as follows: referent, expert, rewarder, coercer, legitimate authority, involver, and norm setter. Observations of principal behaviors and interviews were conducted to confirm the information obtained from the questionnaires. Results are displayed in eight tables. Although principals were ranked very similarly by teachers in high-achieving and in other schools in terms of the influence-gaining behaviors used, principals of high-achieving schools exhibited six of the seven behaviors to a significantly higher degree than did the principals of the other schools. (MLF)

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OBSERVATIONS OF PRINCIPALS' INFLUENCE-GAINING BEHAVIORS IN SCHOOLS OF VARYING LEVELS OF INSTRUCTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS*

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* Reginald M. High, Director, Tennessee State Facilitator Project (TSFP), BERS, and C. M. Achilles, Educational Leadership, College of Education, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN, 37996-3400.0

OBSERVATIONS OF PRINCIPALS' INFLUENCE-GAINING BEHAVIORS IN SCHOOLS OF VARYING LEVELS OF INSTRUCTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS*

Donald Erickson (1979, p. 11) connected effective leadership of principals to student outcomes with the statement, "...knowledge of the educational enterprise will remain deficient until administrative behavior and student learning are empirically linked." With Erickson's admonition in mind, this study was undertaken to see if there were differences in the influence-gaining behaviors of principals in schools of varying levels of instructional effectiveness. Seven behaviors composed the classification system which included French and Raven's (1959) five bases of social power and two additional bases of social power derived from the literature (Leithwood and Montgomery, 1982; Ross, 1980; Keedy, 1983). The seven bases of social influence-gaining behaviors analyzed were principal: as referent; as expert; as rewarder; as coercer; as legitimate authority; as involver; and principal as norm setter. An intensive research literature review yielded conclusive support for the seven bases of power as behaviors which principals may use to gain influence with their teachers and thereby to provide leadership for their schools.

The field research took place in a portion of an urban school district where effective schooling elements were being implemented to improve education opportunities and performance of youngsters. Improvement or effectiveness was defined narrowly in the tradition of effective school studies (Edmonds, 1979; Austin, 1979) as pupil improvement on standardized tests (i.e., attaining

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* Reginald M. High, Director, Tennessee State Facilitator Project (TSFP), BERS, and C. M. Achilles, Educational Leadership, College of Education, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN, 37996-3400.0

at least the national norm) so that performance exceeds the expected or predicted levels of learning of students in these schools. By the end of the 1983-84 school year, 19 schools within the district were involved in the improvement process.

Initial division of the 19 schools into two groups (high-achieving schools and other schools) was based on past performance of pupils on the California Achievement Test (CAT), results of the field test observations/interviews by teams of unbiased out-of-district observers, and the estimates of four instructional supervisors who worked with the schools closely.

Nine of the 19 schools were included in the study. These nine schools met the following criteria: (1) the principal of each school must have been principal in the school for a minimum of three years; (2) elementary schools must have included grades K-5 or K-4; (3) middle schools must have included grades 6-8; (4) student population must have been composed of at least 95 percent minorities. These criteria helped match schools closely so that valid comparisons could be made among them.

The nine schools chosen for this study included two elementary schools and one middle school (designated as high-achieving schools) and four elementary and two middle schools (designated as other schools); all schools had been involved in the school improvement project for at least one year. Activities of the principals of these schools in influencing teachers to accept, adopt, and use school improvement elements were the focus for the study of principal use of influence-gaining behaviors in schools of different levels of instructional effectiveness.

Two descriptive approaches were used to collect data for this study — questionnaires and observations/interviews. Teachers responded to a three-part

questionnaire designed specifically to explore their perceptions of principals' influence-gaining behaviors. Principals completed a similar questionnaire designed to explore how the principal perceived that he/she used influence-gaining behaviors with teachers. Observations of principal behaviors, interviews and reviews of other data were conducted to confirm the information obtained from the questionnaires and to assess the degrees of implementation of the effective schools elements. The observations were guided by structured observation/interview instruments. Using questions developed from the seven bases of principal power, principals and selected teachers were interviewed to confirm the validity of the questionnaire responses and to obtain additional data. Appropriate validity procedures, reliability estimates and inter-data collection process consistency factors were achieved. Observations and conclusions were based on the four separate data-collection processes (teacher questionnaire, principal questionnaire, observation/interviews, and implementation questionnaire results).

Summary of Results

Principals included in this study were perceived to gain influence in the following ways.

1. Teacher Perceptions. Principals in high achieving schools were perceived to exhibit three behaviors — expert, norm setter, and legitimate authority -- to the highest degree, and the behaviors of coercer and enabler least. Principals in the other schools were perceived to exhibit the behaviors of norm setter and legitimate authority most, while coercer and enabler behaviors were employed least. (Table 1, p. 4).

TABLE 1

DEGREE PRINCIPALS EXHIBIT/POSSESS BEHAVIORS: TEACHER PERCEPTIONS FROM PART II OF TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

HIGH ACHIEVING SCHOOLS

Behaviors	School 113 $\bar{x}$	Rank	School 153 $\bar{x}$	Rank	School 233 $\bar{x}$	Rank	$\sum$ of Ranks	(A) Rank
Referent	5.36	3.0	5.05	4.0	5.18	4.0	11.0	4.0
Expert	5.40	2.0	5.35	1.0	5.44	2.5	5.5	1.0
Enabler	4.95	6.0	4.30	6.0	4.81	5.0	17.0	6.0
Coercer	3.31	7.0	3.60	7.0	4.38	7.0	21.0	7.0
Leg. Auth.	5.27	4.0	5.30	2.0	5.63	1.0	7.0	3.0
Norm Set.	5.63	1.0	5.25	3.0	5.44	2.5	6.5	2.0
Involver	5.00	5.0	4.80	5.0	4.63	6.0	16.0	5.0

OTHER SCHOOLS

Behaviors	School 132 $\bar{x}$	Rank	School 162 $\bar{x}$	Rank	School 212 $\bar{x}$	Rank
Referent	4.96	4.0	4.65	3.0	4.71	4.0
Expert	5.06	2.5	5.10	1.0	5.00	3.0
Enabler	4.00	6.0	4.60	4.5	4.67	5.0
Coercer	2.80	7.0	1.65	7.0	3.53	7.0
Leg. Auth.	5.06	2.5	4.55	6.0	5.10	2.0
Norm Set.	5.18	1.0	4.75	2.0	5.25	1.0
Involver	4.93	5.0	4.60	4.5	4.32	6.0

Behaviors	School 122 $\bar{x}$	Rank	School 142 $\bar{x}$	Rank	School 222 $\bar{x}$	Rank	$\sum$ of Ranks	(C) Rank
Referent	4.10	4.0	3.86	6.0	4.14	6.0	27.0	5.0
Expert	4.40	3.0	4.27	5.0	4.28	4.0	17.5	3.0
Enabler	3.40	6.0	4.02	4.0	4.21	5.0	31.5	6.0
Coercer	1.00	7.0	2.54	7.0	3.28	7.0	42.0	7.0
Leg. Auth.	4.90	2.0	4.54	1.0	4.92	2.5	16.0	2.0
Norm Set.	4.00	5.0	4.31	3.0	5.71	1.0	13.0	1.0
Involver	5.40	1.0	4.36	2.0	4.92	2.5	21.0	4.0

Scale for Means: 1=non-existent to 6=very high

r_s (A/C) = .86 (.67 sig. at .10) (.76 sig. at .05) (.87 sig. at .01)
N=7, Df=5

2. Principal Perceptions. Principals in high-achieving schools rated themselves highest in referent influence and legitimate authority and rated themselves lowest in involver and coercer behaviors. Principals in other schools rated themselves highest on norm setting and legitimate authority; lowest on referent and coercer behaviors. (Table 2, p. 6)

3. Observations/Interviews. Principals in high-achieving schools were rated highest in expert and referent behaviors, and rated lowest in involver, coercer, and norm setter behaviors. Principals in other schools were rated highest on expert and legitimate authority behaviors, and lowest on norm setter and involver. (Table 3, p. 7).

The preceding suggest that there are differences between the influence-gaining behaviors of principals in high-achieving schools and principals in the other schools. To check on this initial perception, data were reviewed and compared in several ways. Data from two sources, principal questionnaire and teacher questionnaire, were compared in four ways: (1) Teacher perceptions between the two groups of schools; (2) teacher/principal perceptions within high-achieving schools; (3) principal perceptions between the two groups of schools; and (4) teacher/principal perceptions within the other schools. Data from observations/interviews were compared between principals of the two groups of schools.

Teacher/teacher differences. Teachers in the high-achieving schools rated their principals significantly higher on six of the seven behaviors: referent, expert, enabler, coercer, legitimate authority, and norm setter ($p < .05$) than teachers in other schools rated their principals. (Table 4, p. 8).

Teacher/principal differences within high-achieving schools. Differences between perceptions of principals and of teachers on five of the

TABLE 2

DEGREE PRINCIPALS EXHIBIT/POSSESS BEHAVIORS: PRINCIPAL PERCEPTIONS FROM PART II OF PRINCIPAL QUESTIONNAIRE

HIGH ACHIEVING SCHOOLS

Behaviors	School 113 $\bar{x}$	Rank	School 153 $\bar{x}$	Rank	School 233 $\bar{x}$	Rank	$\sum$ of Ranks	(B) Rank
Referent	6.00	2.0	6.00	1.5	5.50	3.0	6.5	1.5
Expert	5.00	5.0	5.05	3.5	5.00	6.5	15.0	5.0
Enabler	5.00	5.0	5.00	5.5	5.50	3.0	13.5	4.0
Coercer	2.50	7.0	2.50	7.0	5.50	3.0	17.0	6.5
Leg. Auth.	6.00	2.0	6.00	1.5	5.50	3.0	6.5	1.5
Norm Set.	6.00	2.0	5.50	3.5	5.50	3.0	8.5	3.0
Involver	5.00	5.0	5.00	5.5	5.00	6.5	17.0	6.5

OTHER SCHOOLS

Behaviors	School 132 $\bar{x}$	Rank	School 162 $\bar{x}$	Rank	School 212 $\bar{x}$	Rank	$\sum$ of Ranks	(D) Rank
Referent	4.50	4.5	5.00	4.0	4.50	6.5	28.0	6.0
Expert	5.00	3.0	5.50	2.5	6.00	2.0	19.0	3.0
Enabler	2.50	6.0	5.50	2.5	4.50	6.5	27.5	5.0
Coercer	1.50	7.0	3.00	7.0	5.00	4.5	39.5	7.0
Leg. Auth.	4.50	4.5	4.50	5.5	6.00	2.0	17.5	2.0
Norm Set.	6.00	1.5	6.00	1.0	6.00	2.0	16.0	1.0
Involver	6.00	1.5	4.50	5.5	5.00	4.5	20.5	4.0
	School 122 $\bar{x}$	Rank	School 142 $\bar{x}$	Rank	School 222 $\bar{x}$	Rank		
Referent	5.50	1.0	4.50	6.0	4.00	6.0		
Expert	5.00	3.0	5.00	4.0	4.50	4.5		
Enabler	4.00	6.0	5.00	4.0	5.00	2.5		
Coercer	1.50	7.0	3.50	7.0	2.50	7.0		
Leg. Auth.	5.00	3.0	6.00	1.5	5.50	1.0		
Norm Set.	5.00	3.0	5.00	4.0	4.50	4.5		
Involver	4.55	5.0	6.00	1.5	5.00	2.5		

Scale for Means: 1=non-existent to 6=very high

r_s (B/D) = .36 (NS)

TABLE 3

DEGREE PRINCIPALS EXHIBIT/POSSESS BEHAVIORS:
OBSERVER/INTERVIEW RATINGS

HIGH ACHIEVING SCHOOLS

Behaviors	School 113 $\bar{x}$	Rank	School 153 $\bar{x}$	Rank	School 233 $\bar{x}$	Rank	Σ of Ranks	(G) Rank
Referent	5.00	1.0	4.00	3.5	3.10	7.0	11.5	4.0
Expert	4.00	3.5	4.00	3.5	4.00	4.0	11.0	2.5
Enabler	4.00	3.5	3.50	7.0	4.00	4.0	14.5	5.5
Coercer	3.50	6.0	3.90	6.0	4.00	4.0	16.0	7.0
Leg. Auth.	4.00	3.5	4.00	3.5	4.00	4.0	11.0	2.5
Norm Set.	4.00	3.5	4.60	1.0	5.00	1.0	5.5	1.0
Involver	3.30	7.0	4.00	3.5	4.00	4.0	14.5	5.5

OTHER SCHOOLS

Behaviors	School 132 $\bar{x}$	Rank	School 162 $\bar{x}$	Rank	School 212 $\bar{x}$	Rank	Σ of Ranks	(H) Rank
Referent	3.30	6.0	3.50	1.0	3.00	7.0		
Expert	4.00	3.0	2.20	7.0	4.00	3.0		
Enabler	4.00	3.0	2.90	4.5	4.00	3.0		
Coercer	4.00	3.0	3.30	3.0	4.00	3.0		
Leg. Auth.	4.00	3.0	3.40	2.0	4.00	3.0		
Norm Set.	3.00	7.0	2.50	6.0	3.30	6.0		
Involver	4.00	3.0	2.90	4.5	4.00	3.0		

Behaviors	School 122 $\bar{x}$	Rank	School 142 $\bar{x}$	Rank	School 222 $\bar{x}$	Rank	Σ of Ranks	(H) Rank
Referent	3.00	2.0	2.00	6.5	3.60	4.0	26.5	6.0
Expert	2.00	5.0	4.00	1.0	3.50	5.0	24.0	4.0
Enabler	2.90	3.0	2.20	4.5	3.00	7.0	25.0	5.0
Coercer	1.40	7.0	3.00	2.0	3.70	3.0	21.0	2.0
Leg. Auth.	2.60	4.0	2.70	3.0	3.90	2.0	17.0	1.0
Norm Set.	1.60	6.0	2.00	6.5	4.00	1.0	32.5	7.0
Involver	4.00	1.0	2.20	4.5	3.40	6.0	22.0	3.0

Scale for Means: 1=non-existent to 5=very high

r_s (G/H) = -.35 (NS)

TABLE 4

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN TEACHER PERCEPTIONS: DEGREE TO WHICH PRINCIPALS EXHIBIT INFLUENCE-GAINING BEHAVIORS, HIGH ACHIEVING SCHOOLS VS. OTHER SCHOOLS

Behavior	U Values: High Achieving Schools (N = 3)	U Values: Other Schools (N = 6)	Significance Levels	
Referent	18	0	$p \leq .001$	
Expert	18	0	$p \leq .001$	
Enabler	16	2	$p \leq .004$	
Coercer	17	1	$p \leq .002$	
Leg. Auth.	18	0	$p \leq .001$	
Norm Setter	14.5	3.5	$p \leq .013$	
Involver	10	8	$p \leq .066$	NS

seven behaviors were not significant in the high-achieving schools. The exceptions were principal as referent and principal as enabler. On these two behaviors, principals rated themselves significantly ($p < .05$) higher than their teachers rated them. (Table 5, p. 10).

Teacher/principal differences within other schools. No significant differences were found. (Table 6, p. 11) on these perceptions.

Principal/principal differences. Significant differences were found on five of the seven behaviors between perceptions of principals in high-achieving and in other schools. Principals in high-achieving schools rated themselves higher on referent, enabler, coercer, legitimate authority, and norm setter than did principals in other schools. (Table 7, p. 12).

Principal/principal differences from observations/interviews. The observation teams ranked principals of high-achieving schools significantly ($p < .05$) higher on all seven of the behaviors than they ranked the principals of other schools. (Table 8, p. 13).

TABLE 5

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN TEACHER AND PRINCIPAL PERCEPTIONS: DEGREE TO WHICH PRINCIPALS EXHIBIT INFLUENCE-GAINING BEHAVIORS, IN HIGH ACHIEVING SCHOOLS

Behavior	U Values: Principal (N = 3)	U Values: Teacher (N = 3)	Significance Levels	
Referent	9	0	$p \leq .05$	
Expert	4	6	$p \leq .50$	NS
Enabler	9	0	$p \leq .05$	
Coercer	3	6	$p \leq .35$	NS
Leg. Auth.	8	1	$p \leq .10$	NS
Norm Setter	7	2	$p \leq .20$	NS
Involver	7.5	1.5	$p \leq .15$	NS

TABLE 6

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PRINCIPAL PERCEPTIONS: DEGREE TO WHICH PRINCIPALS EXHIBIT INFLUENCE-GAINING BEHAVIORS, HIGH ACHIEVING SCHOOLS VS. OTHER SCHOOLS

Behavior	U Values: High Achieving Schools (N = 3)	U Values: Other Schools (N = 6)	Significance Levels	
Referent	17.5	.5	$p \leq .002$	
Expert	7.5	10.5	$p \leq .066$	NS
Enabler	13.5	4.5	$p \leq .02$	
Coercer	11	7	$p \leq .04$	
Leg. Auth.	13.5	4.5	$p \leq .02$	
Norm Setter	13.5	4.5	$p \leq .02$	
Involver	9	29	$p \leq .09$	NS

TABLE 7

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN TEACHER AND PRINCIPAL PERCEPTIONS:
DEGREE PRINCIPALS EXHIBIT BEHAVIORS,
OTHER SCHOOLS

Behavior	U Values: Principal (N = 6)	U Values: Teacher (N = 6)	Significance Levels	
Referent	16	16	$p \leq .40$	NS
Expert	25.5	10.5	$p \leq .15$	NS
Enabler	13.5	12.5	$p \leq .19$	NS
Coercer	19	17	$p \leq .46$	NS
Leg. Auth.	18	14	$p \leq .29$	NS
Norm Setter	26	10	$p \leq .12$	NS
Involver	20	16	$p \leq .40$	NS

TABLE 8

OBSERVATION/INTERVIEW RATINGS, DEGREE TO WHICH PRINCIPALS EXHIBIT INFLUENCE-GAINING BEHAVIORS, HIGH ACHIEVING SCHOOLS VS. OTHER SCHOOLS

Behavior	U Values: High Achieving (N = 3)	U Values: Other Schools (N = 6)	Significance Levels
Referent	15	3	$p \leq .008$
Expert	13.5	4.5	$p \leq .02$
Enabler	14	4	$p \leq .01$
Coercer	12	6	$p \leq .03$
Leg. Auth.	15	3	$p \leq .008$
Norm Setter	17.5	.5	$p \leq .002$
Involver	11	7	$p \leq .04$

Some Conclusions:

1. Principals of both groups of schools were quite aware of their leadership/influence-gaining behaviors and were able to describe and classify these behaviors. This was evidenced by the general agreement between their perceptions and those of their teachers.
2. Principals of high-achieving schools provided more extensive leadership because they exhibited six of the seven behaviors to a significantly higher degree than did the principals of the other schools.
3. Principals should develop expertise in school-related matters which teachers value.
4. Norm setting is an important source of influence for principals with teachers.
5. Though cause and effort relationships are not contended, increased principal leadership is contributory to higher-achieving schools.
6. Contrary to some current thought, principals do have considerable potential to provide leadership for school improvement.
7. In an organizational sense, principals under utilize their legitimate authority with teachers.
8. Teachers can describe and classify influence-gaining behaviors of their principals.
9. Although in some results there are not differences in kind (e.g., principals are ranked very similarly by teachers in high-achieving and in other schools in terms of the influence-gaining behaviors used (Table 1, p. 4), there often were significant differences in degree (e.g., principals in high-achieving schools were perceived to use more of the behaviors, as shown by results in Table 4, p. 8).

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